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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine what Wisconsin's 92 AM and 107 FM radio and 18 television stations were providing as agricultural market information programming. Data were collected via a two-phase survey. It was found that the number of stations giving farm and market news were 79% of AM, 56% of FM, and 1% of television stations based on a 100% accounting of all Wisconsin stations. Much of the data is given in tabular form. (CK)

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Agricultural Market News Programming of Wisconsin Radio and Television Stations

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AGRICULTURAL MARKET NEWS PROGRAMMING OF WISCONSIN RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS

by

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This research was funded as HATCH Project 1462 by the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station as part of a three-year (1967-70) study of the understanding and use of market news by Wisconsin farmers. Kroupa and Burnett are Professors of Agricultural Journalism, and Larry Meiller is an Extension Radio Specialist.

CONTENTS

	page
INTRODUCTION	1
Objectives of the Study	1
Method	1
Description of Responding Stations	2
AGRICULTURAL MARKET NEWS PROGRAMMING	3
Amount of Agricultural Market News Programming	3
Weekly Schedule of Market Reports	4
Daily Time Periods When Market News Broadcast	6
Ways Agricultural Market News is Reported	8
FREQUENCY AND COMPLETENESS OF COMMODITY REPORTS	10
Outlook Information	14
Anticipated Receipts	14
Density of Market Broadcasts	14
SOURCES OF MARKET NEWS INFORMATION	19
Local Sources of Market News	19
Local Market News Received by Telephone	19
Sponsorship of Agricultural News Programming	20
Advertising Income	21
AGRICULTURAL NEWS STAFF	22
Staff Assigned to Report Agricultural News and Markets	22
Understanding of Agricultural Market Terms	23
Changes Broadcasters Would Like to See in Market Information Received	23
Audience Studies Conducted by Stations	24
Summary	24
Some Implications	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY	26

TABLES

Table		page
1.	Percentages of Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations by Time Devoted to Daily Agricultural News Programming, 1968	3
2.	Percentages of Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations by Time Devoted to Daily Agricultural Market News, 1968	4
3.	Number of Days Per Week Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations Carried Agricultural Market News Programming, 1968	5
4.	Times Per Day Market News Reports Were Carried by Wisconsin Radio and Television Stations, 1968	5
5.	Weekly Distribution of Market Broadcasts by 73 Wisconsin AM Radio Stations, 1968-69	6
6.	Weekly Distribution of Market Broadcasts by 60 Wisconsin FM Radio Stations, 1968-69	7
7.	Weekly Distribution of Market Telecasts by 11 Wisconsin TV Stations, 1968-69	8
8.	Ways Agricultural Market News is Broadcast by Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations, 1968	9
9.	Frequency and Completeness of Commodity Reports Given by Wisconsin AM Radio Stations, 1968-69	11
10.	Frequency and Completeness of Commodity Reports Given by Wisconsin FM Radio Stations, 1968-69	12
11.	Frequency and Completeness of Commodity Reports Given by Wisconsin Television Stations, 1968-69	13
12.	Methods of Using Market News Obtained by Telephone, Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations, 1968	20
13.	Percent of Advertising Income Derived from Agriculture-Related Firms by Wisconsin Broadcast Media, 1968	21
14.	Amount of Time Wisconsin Agricultural News Broadcasters Devote to Their Duties, 1968	22
15.	Respondents' Knowledge of Braodcast Market Terms, 1968	23

FIGURES

Figure		page
1.	Density of Market Information Broadcast by Wisconsin AM Radio Stations, 1968-69	16
2.	Density of Market Information Broadcast by Wisconsin FM Radio Stations, 1968-69	17
3.	Density of Market Information Broadcast by Wisconsin Television Stations, 1968-69	18

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural production and marketing have changed significantly in the last two decades. Rapid adoption of genetic and technological developments has allowed a decreasing number of farmers to produce an increasing amount of commodities. Market institutions have necessarily changed in structure and operation. A by-product of changes in production and marketing of agricultural commodities has been the growth in volume of information available to farmers.

The mass media, especially the broadcast media, have traditionally been farmers' main source of market price information. In view of the changes that have occurred in agricultural marketing, the question arises as to how well Wisconsin's broadcast media are serving their farm audiences.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to determine what Wisconsin's 92 AM and 107 FM radio and 18 television stations were providing as agricultural market information programming. Specifically, this study sought to determine the timing, frequency and completeness of agricultural market news reports carried.

In addition, data were wanted on the sources of market price information, advertising income and sponsorship of market news programs, staff assigned to agricultural news programming, broadcasters' understanding of marketing terms, and audience studies conducted by stations. As a result, this report is divided into four major sections: agricultural market news programming, frequency and completeness of commodity reports, sources of market news information, and agricultural news staff.

Method

Data for this report were collected in two phases. The first consisted of a mail survey of all licensed stations operating in Wisconsin. Three mailings initiated between March 15, 1968 and April 12, 1968 resulted in completed returns from 50 AM(54%), 46 FM(43%) and 9 TV(50%) stations. Other attempts were made, using an abbreviated questionnaire and finally the telephone, until data were obtained for all Wisconsin stations.

The abbreviated questionnaire sought information on only timing, frequency and completeness of market reports. Broadcast area maps were obtained for all Wisconsin radio and television stations to determine density of available market news. This second phase of surveying included mailings on December 17, 1968 and February 11, 1969 with telephoning completed by the end of February.

Those parts of this report which use combined data from both pnases of the survey are so identified. Obtaining data from all Wisconsin stations did not appreciably alter findings from analysis of the first phase data.

Description of the Responding Stations

Eighty percent of the AM returns were from medium power (1-5KW); 18 percent from low power (.25-.5KW), and 2 percent from high power (10 or more KW) stations. The responding FM stations were mostly (50 percent) low power (2.5-20KW), while 32 percent were medium power (21-70KW), and 18 percent were high power (71 or more KW). The nine responding Wisconsin television stations included four high power (201 or more KW), three low power (28-99KW) and two medium power (100-200KW).

The station representative completing the questionnaire was usually the farm director or the program director. Twenty-eight percent of AM, 29 percent of the FM, and five of the nine TV respondents were farm directors. Twenty-three percent of the AM and 30 percent of the FM respondents had been in their present job 1-2 years; while 21 percent of the AM and 33 percent of the FM respondents held their present position for 17 or more years. Four of the nine TV respondents held the same position for 3-4 years, while none had held their position for nine or more years.

AGRICULTURAL MARKET NEWS PROGRAMMING

The numbers of Wisconsin stations giving farm and market news were 79 percent (73 of 92) of AM, 56 percent (60 of 107) of FM, and 61 percent (11 of 18) of television stations based on a 100 percent accounting of all Wisconsin stations. However, data received from the 77 radio and TV stations that broadcast market news and completed the long form questionnaire were used for most of the tables in this report.

Amount of Agricultural Market News Programming

Table 1 shows the amount of time Wisconsin broadcast media devoted to agricultural programming, including market news reports, during a typical weekday. Most AM and FM stations devoted one-half hour or less to agricultural programming. The similarity in amounts of time devoted by AM and FM stations is probably due to simulcast broadcasting of agricultural news on stations owned by the same parent company.

Television stations generally had early morning or noon agricultural news programming which was either short, 15 minutes or less, or long, 40-60 minutes.

Table 1

Percentages of Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations by Time Devoted to Daily Agricultural News Programming, 1968

Minutes per Weekday	AM (N=43)	FM (N=29)	TV (N=5)
1-15	27.9%	36.7%	40.0%
16-30	23.3	36.7	20.0
31-45	2.3	-	-
46-60	9.3	-	40.0
61-75	4.7	3.2	-
76-90	11.6	10.0	-
91-105	-	-	-
106-120	11.6	6.7	-
120 or more	9.3	6.7	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Market news reports used a large percentage of the time allotted for agricultural news programming, as indicated in Table 2. The typical Wisconsin AM station broadcast nine or more minutes, while over one-third gave 17 or more minutes of market news, usually 5-6 minutes daily. However, one-third of the FM stations did give 15 or more minutes of market news.

Table 2

Percentages of Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations by Time Devoted to Daily Agricultural Market News, 1968

Minutes Per Weekday	AM (N=43)	FM (N=29)	TV (N=5)
1-2 Minutes	-	3.4%	40.0%
3-4	2.3	-	-
5-6	23.2	48.3	60.0
7-8	4.7	-	-
9-10	16.3	10.3	-
11-12	2.3	3.4	-
13-14	-	-	-
15-16	14.0	13.8	-
17 or more	37.2	20.7	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Television stations devoted six minutes or less per day to market news. This is enough to give cash and futures prices for grain and livestock for terminal markets and perhaps one or two local markets. Television stations broadcast the market news only once daily.

Weekly Schedule of Market Reports

Almost all radio and television stations with market news carried these reports five or six days per week. Only five percent of the AM and no FM or TV stations carried market programming less than five or more than six days weekly. While more than half of the AM stations broadcast market news six days, 39 percent broadcast five days a week. FM stations split about evenly between five and six days of broadcasts, while television stations favored a five day schedule.

Table 3

Number of Days Per Week Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations Carried Agricultural Market News Programming, 1968.

Days Per Week	AM (N=43)	FM (N=29)	TV (N=5)
Less than five days	4.7%	-	-
Five days	39.5	48.3	80.0
Six days	51.1	44.8	20.0
Seven days	4.7	6.9	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

About 90 percent of the AM and FM stations gave market news three or fewer times daily, Monday through Friday. Forty-four percent of the AM stations carried two reports daily, while FM and TV stations favored single daily reports, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Times Per Day Market News Reports Were Carried by Wisconsin Radio and Television Stations, 1968.

Times Daily	AM (N=43)	FM (N=29)	TV (n=5)
One	25.6%	48.3%	100.0%
Two	44.2	20.7	-
Three	20.9	20.7	-
Four	4.7	6.9	-
Five	2.3	-	-
Six	2.3	3.4	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Daily Time Periods When Market News Broadcast

Data obtained from all 73 AM stations carrying market news, Table 5, show how the reports were distributed.

The noon period was the most popular for market news, with 6 a.m. ranking a close second. An important point is that the noon markets are probably too late to be useful to most farmers on the day of the broadcast; yet this hour attracts the most broadcasts.

Table 5

Weekly Distribution of Market Broadcasts by 73 Wisconsin AM Radio Stations, 1968-69

Time	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
5:00 a.m.	1	14	16	16	16	16	7
6:00 a.m.	4	42	44	44	44	44	29
7:00 a.m.	2	11	13	13	13	12	9
8:00 a.m.	1	3	2	3	3	3	0
9:00 a.m.	0	4	4	4	4	3	0
10:00 a.m.	0	3	4	3	4	3	1
11:00 a.m.	0	10	10	10	10	10	3
12:00 p.m.	8	56	54	56	54	55	24
1:00 p.m.	1	4	4	4	4	4	0
2:00 p.m.	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
3:00 p.m.	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
Other	0	6	6	6	6	6	0

The pattern for FM radio stations was similar to AM and is presented in Table 6. Sixty of the state's 107 FM stations broadcast market news. Approximately 70 percent of the FM stations broadcast market reports at noon and 50 percent had a report between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.

About 10 percent of both AM and FM stations broadcast market reports during some other time slot. These reports were usually between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and were part of regular news programs.

Telecasts of market news followed a pattern similar to radio. Most reports were given during the noon hour, with none scheduled from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Eleven of the state's 18 operating television stations broadcast market news.

Table 6

Weekly Distribution of Market Broadcasts by 60 Wisconsin FM Radio Stations, 1968-69

Time	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
5:00 a.m.	0	8	10	10	10	10	6
6:00 a.m.	4	31	31	31	31	31	23
7:00 a.m.	2	11	12	13	12	12	6
8:00 a.m.	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
9:00 a.m.	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
10:00 a.m.	0	3	3	3	3	3	1
11:00 a.m.	0	9	9	9	9	9	3
12:00 p.m.	4	44	44	43	43	43	20
1:00 p.m.	1	3	3	3	3	3	1
2:00 p.m.	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
3:00 p.m.	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
Other	0	7	7	7	7	7	1

As shown in Table 7, seven of the eleven stations gave market news at noon. One station gave a summary of market news for the week on Sunday at 9:30 p.m. No television station gave market news on Saturday and only two on Sunday.

Table 7

Weekly Distribution of Market Telecasts
by 11 Wisconsin TV Stations, 1968-69

Time	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
5:00 a.m.	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
6:00 a.m.	0	2	2	2	2	2	0
7:00 a.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8:00 a.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9:00 a.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10:00 a.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11:00 a.m.	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
12:00 p.m.	1	7	7	7	7	7	0
1:00 p.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2:00 p.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3:00 p.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

The concentration of market reports in the 5:00-7:00 a.m. and noon hour slots for AM, FM and TV stations is in line with earlier Wisconsin studies and findings concerning the times farmers want to hear market news. A 1967 survey conducted by the National Association of Farm Broadcasters indicated that nationwide, 49 percent of the farmers wanted to hear market reports before 7:00 a.m. while 52 percent preferred the noon hour.[1]

Ways Agricultural Market News is Reported

Most agricultural market news reports are given as part of a regular morning or noon hour farm program by one-half of the AM, 70 percent of FM, and four or five television stations. Ten percent of the AM stations give market news as part of regular non-agricultural news programs, while another

[1]National Association of Farm Broadcasters, "The First Medium--Farm Radio," 1967.

10 percent air market news as separate spots. The remaining AM stations use a combination of the above methods for reporting agricultural market news.

Table 8

Ways Agricultural Market News is Broadcast by Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations, 1968

Broadcast Methods	AM (N=40)	FM (N=29)	TV (N=5)
Part of Regular Farm News Program	52.5%	69.0%	80.0%
Part of Regular Non-Farm News Program	10.0	6.9	20.0
Separate Spot Announcements	10.0	10.3	-
Combination of Methods	27.5	13.8	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Spot or very brief market reports were reported one to four times daily by seven AM, three FM, and no television stations.

FREQUENCY AND COMPLETENESS OF COMMODITY REPORTS

Wisconsin broadcast media appear to be providing rather complete reports on most common classes of livestock. All radio and television stations reporting market news gave cash prices for market hogs, cattle and lambs. Although there was wide variation as to how many times per day these prices were given, all cash livestock prices were given once and frequently two or three times daily.

Nearly all stations completing this section of the questionnaire, gave price information for all grades of livestock. Cash grain, milk and dairy products, specialty crops, and commodity futures prices were less frequently reported, and then usually only the top grades, classes or months.

Table 9 shows the frequency and completeness of commodity reports by Wisconsin AM radio stations. As expected, livestock prices were reported most often. Market hogs, fed cattle, slaughter lambs, dairy cattle for slaughter, feeder cattle and feeder hogs were reported at least once daily by most AM stations giving market reports. The AM stations that gave the livestock markets two or more times daily outnumbered those that gave the markets only once daily.

Most stations gave all grades of livestock rather than just the top grades. Stations giving all grades outnumbered the "top grades only" stations by 3 to 1. This situation did not hold for futures market prices. Less than 15 AM stations reported the futures prices. Grain futures were reported more frequently than livestock futures and were given usually once daily.

The situation for frequency and completeness of FM commodity reports was quite similar to that for the AM stations. This was expected because many FM market reports are simulcast from the parent AM station.

Livestock reports predominated with FM stations and were most commonly given once daily. Whereas AM stations split about equal as to once or twice daily reports, the FM once daily reports outnumbered the twice daily reports by almost 2 to 1.

Another key difference between AM and FM stations was that about one-third more FM stations gave future market reports. The number of FM stations giving beef futures was almost twice the number of AM stations, 16 to 9. A greater proportion of the FM stations also tended to give all months for beef futures. However, most FM stations gave grain and other commodity futures prices for only the first three months, as shown in Table 10.

Television stations also gave heaviest emphasis to livestock reports. Most reports were given once daily, usually during the noon hour. Futures markets reports were given by 1 to 3 stations, depending on the commodity, with corn futures given most frequently.

Table 9

Frequency and Completeness of Commodity Reports Given by Wisconsin AM Radio Stations, 1968-69[a]

	Frequency								Completeness	
	Daily reports times per day				Less than daily times per week					
Cash Prices	1	2	3	more	1	2	3	more	All Grades	Top Grades
Market hogs	27	25	6	5	1	0	0	1	47	14
Fed cattle	27	24	6	5	1	0	0	1	44	16
Slaughter lambs	27	24	6	4	1	0	0	1	46	14
Feeder hogs	21	20	4	2	2	1	0	0	37	10
Dairy cattle slaughter	26	20	6	5	1	0	0	1	43	14
Feeder cattle	23	18	5	2	2	1	0	1	38	10
Poultry	16	7	2	0	0	0	1	1	21	6
Eggs	23	11	4	0	0	0	0	1	31	6
Grain	19	19	2	0	0	0	0	0	18	12
Milk	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	4
Cheese	13	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	11	9
Vegetables (seasonal)	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2
Fruit (seasonal)	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Tobacco (seasonal)	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Honey	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Futures Prices	1	2			once weekly				All Months	1st 3 months
Wheat	11	3			1				6	8
Corn	10	3			1				5	8
Oats	11	3			1				6	8
Rye	9	2			1				5	6
Soybeans	9	3			1				5	7
Beef	6	2			1				6	2
Hogs	6	2			1				6	2
Pork bellies	3	1			0				2	1
Eggs	4	1			1				4	1

[a]Not all stations reporting market news completed this section of the questionnaire or all parts of this section. Therefore, frequency and completeness responses may not be equal.

Table 10

Frequency and Completeness of Commodity Reports Given by Wisconsin FM Radio Stations, 1968-69[a]

	Frequency						Completeness	
	Daily reports times per day				Less than daily times per week		All Grades	Top Grades
Cash Prices	1	2	3	more	1	2		
Market hogs	30	16	5	3	1	0	31	21
Fed cattle	30	16	5	3	1	0	31	21
Salughter lambs	28	16	5	2	1	0	28	21
Feeder hogs	16	13	3	1	2	0	25	7
Dairy cattle slaughter	27	15	5	3	1	0	29	14
Feeder cattle	17	13	4	0	2	0	26	7
Poultry	14	3	1	0	0	0	13	4
Eggs	29	4	2	1	0	0	28	7
Grain	24	3	2	0	1	0	11	18
Milk	5	0	0	0	1	0	14	2
Cheese	18	1	0	0	3	0	17	5
Vegetables (seasonal)	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Fruit (seasonal)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Tobacco (seasonal)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Honey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Futures Prices	1	2	All Months	1st 3 Months
Wheat	18	1	5	14
Corn	17	1	4	14
Oats	18	1	5	14
Rye	16	1	4	13
Soybeans	17	1	5	13
Beef	16	0	12	3
Hogs	5	0	4	2
Pork bellies	3	0	1	2
Eggs	5	0	4	0

[a]Not all stations reporting market news completed this section of the questionnaire or all parts of this section. Thus, the frequency and completeness responses may not be equal.

Table 11

Frequency and Completeness of Commodity Reports Given by Wisconsin Television Stations, 1968-69[a]

	Frequency					Completeness	
	Daily reports times per day		Less than daily times per week			All Grades	Top Grades
Cash Prices	1	2	1	2	3		
Market hogs	6	3	1	0	1	6	4
Fed cattle	5	3	1	1	0	6	3
Slaughter lambs	7	1	1	0	0	4	5
Feeder hogs	2	1	1	0	0	2	1
Dairy cattle slaughter	6	2	1	0	0	6	2
Feeder cattle	2	1	1	0	0	3	1
Poultry	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eggs	3	2	0	0	1	4	1
Grain	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
Milk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cheese	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Vegetables (seasonal)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fruit (seasonal)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tobacco (seasonal)	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Honey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Futures Prices	1	2	All Months	1st 3 Months
Wheat	1	1	0	0
Corn	2	1	0	2
Oats	1	1	0	1
Rye	1	1	0	1
Soybeans	2	0	0	2
Beef	2	0	1	1
Hogs	0	0	0	0
Pork bellies	0	0	0	0
Eggs	0	1	0	0

[a]Not all stations reporting market news completed this section of the questionnaire or all parts of this section. Thus, the frequency and completeness responses may not be equal.

Most stations gave all grades for cash prices, but futures price reports were limited to the first three months, as shown in Table 11.

Outlook Information

Outlook information includes crop and livestock production estimates prepared by federal and state agencies to give some indication of expected production over a period of one to several months. This information is a useful predictor of prices farmers can expect. This kind of information is generally released on a monthly basis by USDA and the Wisconsin Statistical Reporting Service.

Of the 43 Wisconsin AM radio stations completing the long questionnaire, 36 percent broadcast outlook information. Seventeen of the 29 FM, and three of the five television stations reporting market news carried outlook information. Those stations reporting outlook news gave both livestock and grain estimates.

Anticipated Receipts

Anticipated market receipts are the estimated shipments of livestock to the various terminal markets. Since this study was completed, the Chicago terminal market for live hogs and cattle has closed. Although shipments to the terminals follow a definite pattern, usually heaviest at the week's start, these estimates help the farmer plan when and where to sell.

About 80 percent of the AM, 45 percent of the FM and 40 percent of the television stations giving market news broadcast estimated receipts. Most frequently anticipated receipts were reported for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul terminal markets.

Density of Market Broadcasts

Frequency and completeness of market reports is one way of measuring the density or volume of market price information reaching Wisconsin farmers. Another way is to consider the number of market broadcasts reaching the different areas of the state. All Wisconsin stations reporting market news completed broadcast area maps which indicated the usual range of their coverage. From these maps a master map was made to show the overlap in market news.

The density of market information provided by Wisconsin AM, FM and TV stations is presented in Figures 1, 2 and 3. Counties reached by station's market news broadcast were recorded and the density map made from the complete tally of all stations. A county was counted as receiving a station if the broadcast perimeter penetrated its boundaries by any amount. The figures within a county's border should not be interpreted as the number of market broadcasts available to all farmers in that county.

In view of the wide variation in strength of broadcast signals due to environmental factors and individual receiver, these density maps are only crude approximations of the true

availability of market reports in different parts of the state. In addition they do not reflect the impact of market broadcasts by stations in contiguous states. However, the maps do indicate important differences between AM, FM and TV stations.

Figure 1 shows that the density of market news from AM stations was the greatest in the most populous areas of the state. Adams and Washington counties received market news broadcasts from 20 AM stations compared with 3 for Douglas, Iron and Florence counties.

Leading beef and dairy producing counties such as Dane, Marathon, Dodge, and Clark were also near the top in density of AM market reports. Dodge received reports from 19 stations, while Clark, Dane and Marathon, respectively, received 18, 17 and 14 stations. Grant, another leading cattle county, received reports from 9 stations but bordered Dubuque, Iowa which is a market center.

The top hog producing counties of Grant, Lafayette, Dane, Green and Rock received from 9 to 17 stations that broadcast market reports. Once again, the influence of the border states makes the number of stations somewhat lower.

The northern tier counties receive the lowest number of broadcasts. However, considering the number of livestock produced and the number of markets, most counties probably received market reports in line with their production.

The number of FM stations reaching the different counties is shown in Figure 2. Once again most livestock producing areas received 10 or more stations. Adams, Juneau and Fond du Lac counties led with 18 FM stations providing market news. Vilas county apparently did not get market reports by FM radio.

The important thing to note from the FM density map is that the number of FM stations either equalled or exceeded the AM stations giving market news in the lower population livestock producing areas of the state. In the southwest and upper one-third of the state, FM stations giving market news generally outnumbered the AM stations. The FM stations were generally fewer in comparison with AM stations near the border states.

The density of television reports was heaviest where the urban centers have originating stations. Waushara county received broadcasts from eight stations while Douglas, Burnett, Bayfield and Ashland counties received no television market reports from Wisconsin based stations. Minnesota stations filled this void although the limited number of livestock markets in the area dictated a lower density of reports.

As shown in Figure 3, the southern and central livestock and grain producing regions were served mainly by Wisconsin stations. The western livestock area is under the influence of the Minneapolis terminal markets and so it is practical for the Minnesota stations to serve that part of Wisconsin

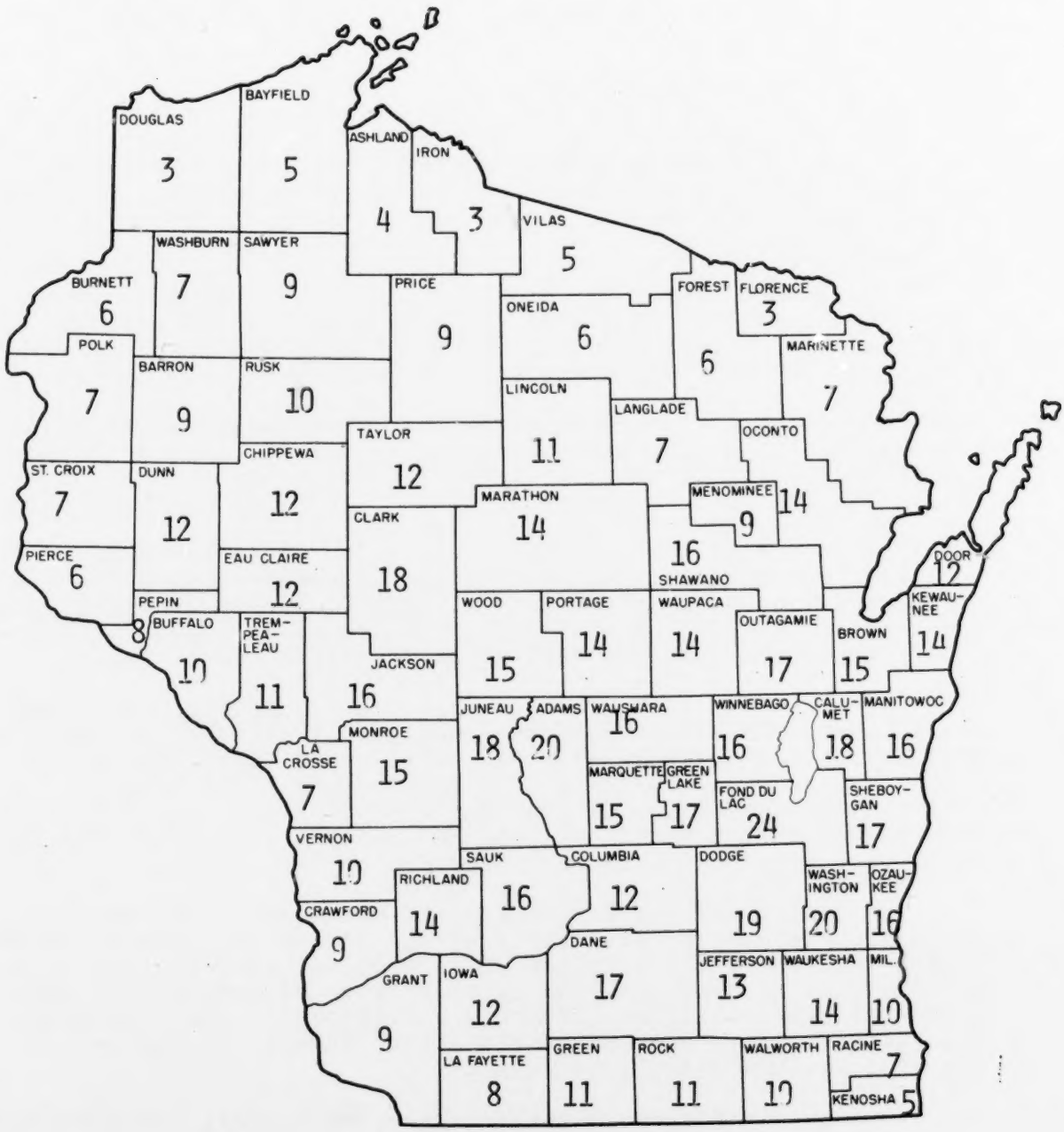

Figure 1 Density of Market Information Broadcast by 73 Wisconsin AM Radio Stations, 1968-69

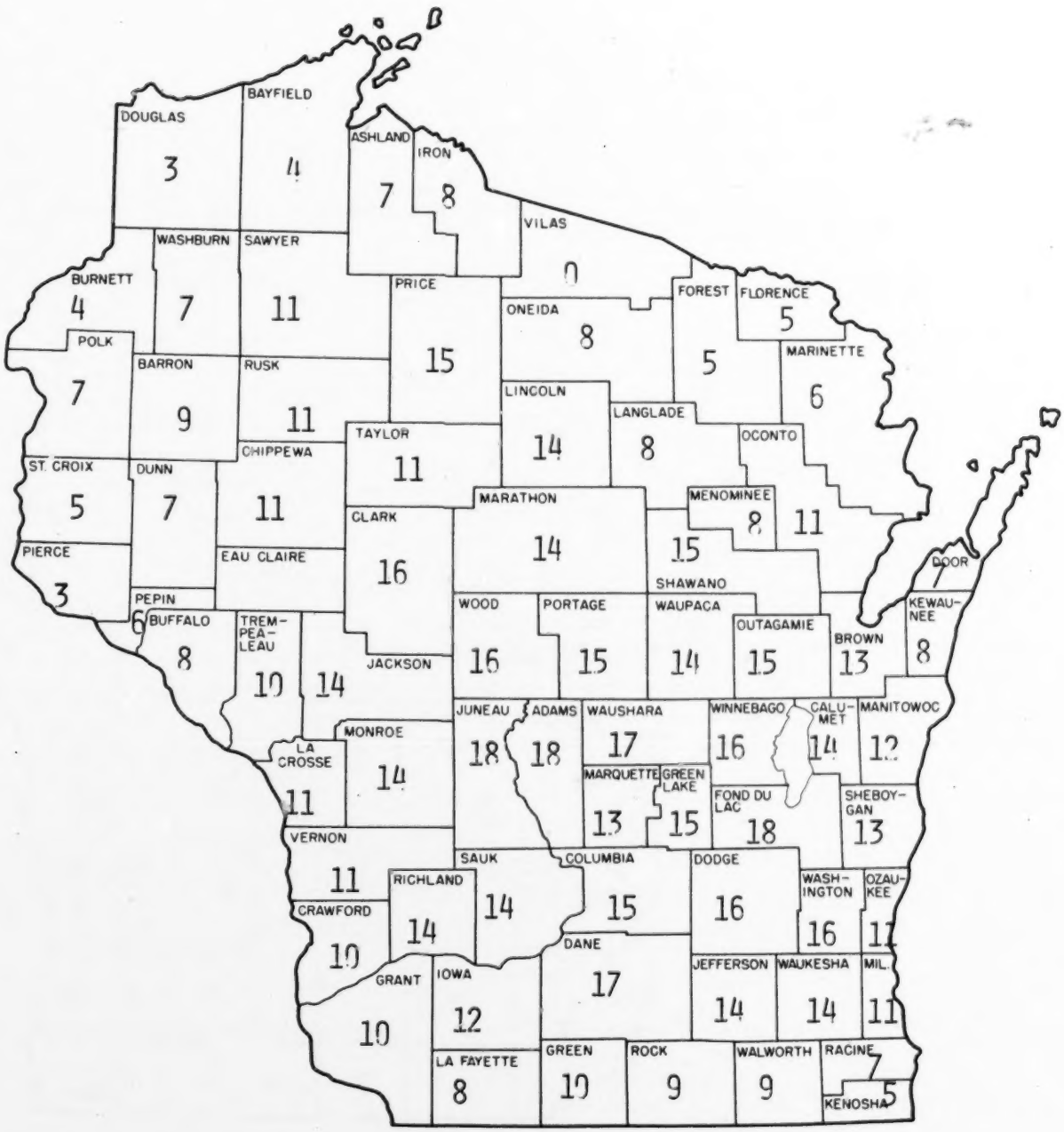

Figure 2 Density of Market Information Broadcast by 60 Wisconsin FM Radio Stations, 1968-69

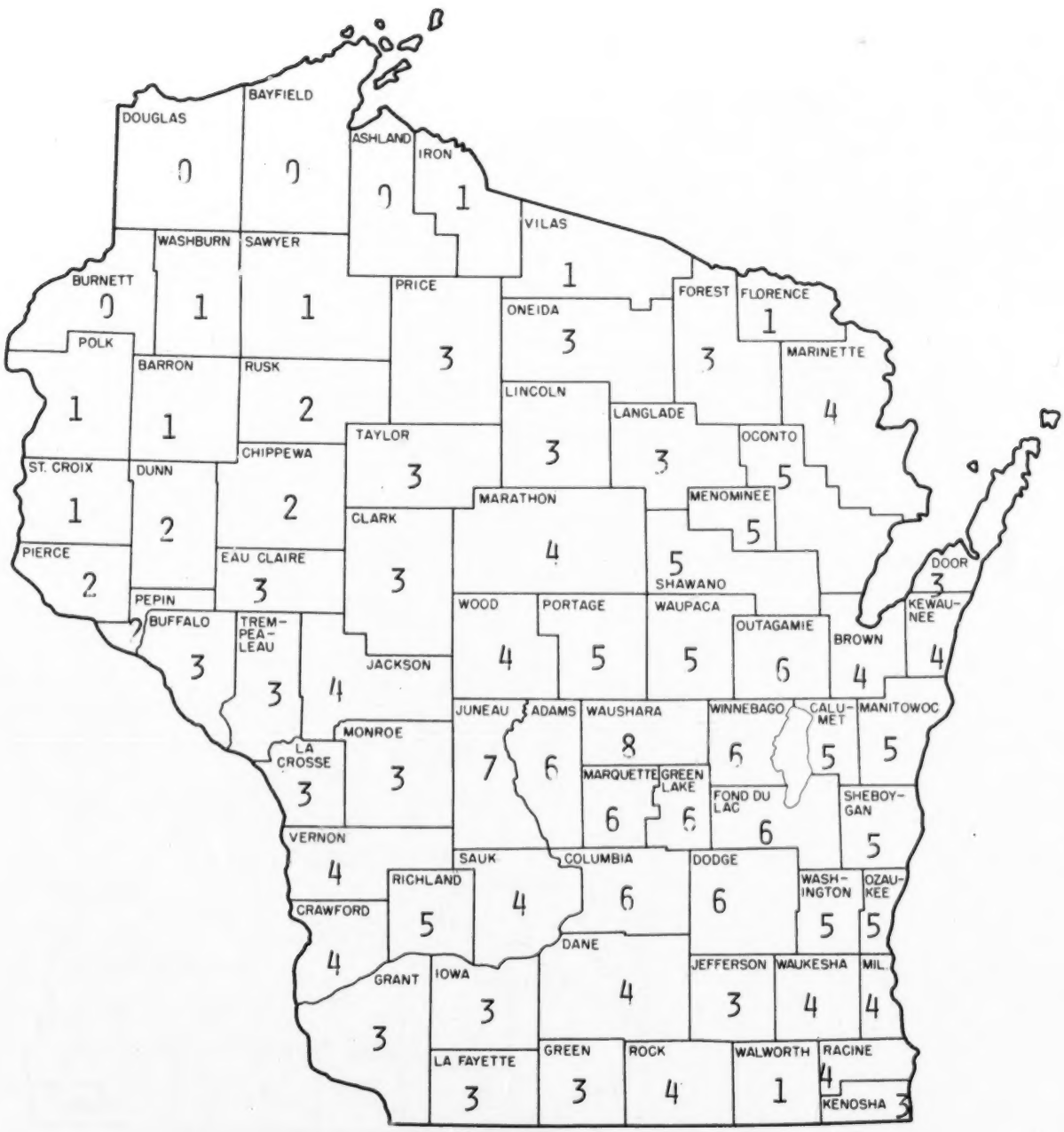

Figure 3 Density of Market Information Broadcast by 11 Wisconsin Television Stations, 1968-69

SOURCES OF MARKET NEWS INFORMATION

Coverage of the terminal livestock markets and grain exchanges is made easy through regular reports received over the UPI and AP wire services. However, the terminal markets are handling an ever-declining proportion of total livestock as animals are being diverted to a growing number of small livestock markets, auctions and packers. Local grain markets have traditionally been grain elevators and feed mills located in most small towns on a railway.

The decentralized nature of the livestock market and the numerous grain elevators have meant that radio and television stations must actively gather local market information, if they are to provide adequate market news coverage for area farmers. Many marketing agencies sponsor market news programs and have thus taken the initiative in establishing a regular flow of price information to the media. One concern of this study was the number of stations using local price information, the sources of this information, and how it was obtained and broadcast.

Local Source of Market News

Local sources of market news include packers, stockyards, auctions, grain elevators, banks, cooperatives and commodity brokers. Price information from these local sources is of particular value to farmers planning to sell livestock or grain locally.

Sixty percent of the AM stations received local price information from stockyards, auctions and packers compared with three-fourths of the FM, and four of five TV stations. No television and only one AM and one FM station received price information from local grain elevators. Several stations received price information from various other local sources such as a cheese exchange.

Wisconsin broadcast media are apparently doing a good job of getting price information from local livestock markets, but are failing to seek local grain prices. One explanation for not seeking or reporting local grain prices is the fact that Wisconsin is not a surplus grain producing state and almost all grain produced is fed to livestock.

Local Market News Received by Telephone

Most of the local price information reported by the Wisconsin broadcast media was received by telephone contact with the local markets. More than half of the AM, two-thirds of the FM, and four-fifths of the television stations reporting local prices receive market news by telephone.

There was some difference among the media in how the market information received by telephone was aired, as shown in Table 12.

About one-half of the AM stations either used taped or direct broadcasts of the information, while one-fourth had the announcer read the local markets. The remaining AM stations use a combination of these methods.

Table 12

Methods of Using Market News Obtained by Telephone, Wisconsin Radio and TV Stations, 1968

Broadcast Methods	AM (N=23)	FM (N=16)	TV (N=4)
Taped or Broadcast Direct	47.8%	25.0%	25.0%
Read by Announcer	26.1	62.5	75.0
Combination of Methods	26.1	12.5	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

About two-thirds of the FM stations preferred to read local markets, while one-fourth used direct or taped reports, and the remainder use a combination of methods. Three of four television stations had the announcer read the local market news.

Market price information received by telephone and broadcast direct or taped was confined almost exclusively to local livestock prices for all Wisconsin broadcast media. One AM station also carried taped or direct reports on eggs and poultry. Local or area stockyards and packers accounted for almost all of the taped or direct local livestock reports for all broadcast media. Nearly 90 percent of the taped or direct broadcast livestock reports by AM stations were sponsored, while 85 percent of similar FM reports were sponsored.

Those stations that read local market news obtained by telephone generally reported livestock and butter and cheese prices. The livestock prices came from local stockyards, packers and auctions; and the cheese and butter prices came from a local cheese exchange. Three-fourths of the AM livestock reports read by the announcer were sponsored, compared with one-fourth for FM.

Sponsorship of Agricultural News Programming

Although most of the market news segments of the agricultural news programming was sponsored by local firms, nearly one-fifth of the AM and one-half of the FM stations had no sponsor for agricultural news programming. Local agricultural firms such as implement, feed, seed and fertilizer dealers were the main sponsors of agricultural news programming. Local non-agricultural firms with an interest in agriculture, such as

banks, and state or national firms, provided the remaining support for agricultural news programming.

Advertising Income

The importance of advertising income from agriculture-related firms varied among the media. Over one-third of the AM, two-thirds of the FM, and three-fourths of the TV stations received five percent or less of their total advertising revenue from agriculture-related firms. However, 25 percent of the AM stations received 6-10 percent, with the remaining stations receiving between 11 and 21 percent or more from agricultural sources. These findings are based on the responses of 32 of 73 AM, 24 of 60 FM and 4 of 11 TV stations in Wisconsin that carried agricultural market news programming. Table 13 shows the distribution of responses.

Table 13

Percent of Advertising Income Derived from Agriculture-Related Firms by Wisconsin Broadcast Media, 1968

Percent of Income	AM (N=32)	FM (N=24)	TV (N=4)
0-5%	37.5%	66.7%	75.0%
6-10	25.0	12.5	-
11-15	12.5	-	-
16-20	15.6	12.5	25.0
21 or more	9.4	8.3	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

AGRICULTURAL NEWS STAFF

The declining size of the Wisconsin farm population makes it difficult for radio and television stations to justify a full-time agricultural news broadcaster. Although 28 percent of the AM, 29 percent of the FM, and five of the nine TV respondents indicated that they were the farm director, this was not a full-time position for most of them.

Staff Assigned to Report Agricultural News and Markets

Fifty percent of the AM, almost 70 percent of the FM, and 80 percent of the TV stations with agricultural news programming reported a regular staff member assigned agricultural news responsibilities.

As Table 14 shows, only three AM, one FM and two television stations had a full-time agricultural news broadcaster. In general, most stations devoted 20 percent or less of a full-time equivalent to agricultural news duties.

Although certain broadcasters were assigned agricultural news responsibilities, they did not necessarily broadcast all of the market news. About 60 percent of the AM, 70 percent of the FM, and 75 percent of TV agricultural market news was broadcast by those regularly assigned this job. The remainder was given by other broadcasters.

Table 14

Amount of Time Wisconsin Agricultural News Broadcasters Devote to Their Duties, 1968.

Percent of Full-time	AM (N=19)	FM (N=19)	TV (N=3)
1-20%	47.4%	36.8%	33.3%
21-40	10.5	-	-
41-60	10.5	47.4	-
61-80	15.8	10.5	-
81-99	-	-	-
100	15.8	5.3	66.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Understanding of Agricultural Market Terms

Respondents were asked to answer a series of multiple choice questions designed to test their knowledge of terms commonly used in wire service market reports. Four of these questions dealt with terms commonly used in reporting cash market prices and volumes, and two dealt with futures markets. Table 15 shows how the respondents scored on this quiz.

The majority of respondents, while answering the cash terms, left the futures market section blank. Failure to complete the section on the futures market probably reflected respondents' unfamiliarity with those terms, since most stations did not broadcast the futures market prices.

The data in Table 15 suggest that many broadcasters responsible for reporting agricultural market news apparently do not know the meaning of many terms used daily in their reports.

Table 15

Respondents' Knowledge of Broadcast Market Terms, 1968.

Term	Percent Right Answers Selected		
	AM	FM	TV
Active	48% (N=29)	52% (N=25)	50% (N=4)
Slow	14% (N=29)	20% (N=25)	33% (N=3)
Higher	57% (N=30)	60% (N=25)	50% (N=4)
Steady to Firm	50% (N=28)	60% (N=25)	75% (N=4)
Grain Futures Contract	43% (N= 7)	9% (N=11)	100% (N=1)
Beef Futures Unit	56% (N= 9)	25% (N=12)	100% (N=1)

*N is the total number answering the question.

Changes Broadcasters Would Like To See In Market Information Received.

One possible explanation as to why some stations did not broadcast more complete market reports could be dissatisfaction with the information received from wire services and local markets.

Only about 27% of the 51 respondents to a question seeking broadcasters' suggestions for changes in market information did not want any changes. Specific changes sought included

local breakdowns of market prices, better short market summaries, more futures quotations, and more outlook information.

Audience Studies Conducted by Stations

Nine of the 36 AM, six of the 27 FM, and two of five TV stations indicated that they had conducted a formal audience study in the five preceding years to determine the information needs of their audiences. The remaining stations had not conducted any formal studies of their audiences.

While three of the nine AM, and two of the six FM stations reported no changes in their agricultural programming as a result of their audience studies, three of the AM, three of the FM, and two TV stations decided to change the content of their agricultural programming.

Almost 80 percent of the 31 AM, over one-half the 24 FM, and two of five TV stations answering did not plan to change their market news coverage. Three AM, two FM, and two TV stations planned to increase their coverage, while one AM station had decided to curtail market news coverage.

Summary

In general most radio and television stations serving Wisconsin farmers broadcast some market news. These reports were usually given between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. and during the noon hour five days a week. In most cases these reports were sponsored by an agricultural marketing firm and were rather complete for livestock. The futures markets, cash grain, and specialty crop reports were largely ignored. Outlook information was reported infrequently by a small number of stations.

Most stations had someone regularly assigned to report market news. News from the terminal markets was received from a wire service, while most local news was phoned in direct or recorded. Only about half of the market news announcers understood a sample of the marketing terms used daily. Few stations had made formal audience studies. Most would like to see changes in the market news received.

Some Implications

Although farmers greatly favor early morning and mid-day market reports, this apparent vote of confidence for the broadcast industry must be tempered by three considerations. First, farmers have become accustomed to receiving market reports at these times and may feel that stations are not inclined to change them. Second, although radio and television sets are tuned in, farmers may not be "receiving" the message because of competition from chores and mealtime activities.

Another point for consideration is that market information received early in the morning or at noon may have little value for many farmers. Early morning reports are yesterday's prices, while noon reports are too late for many to complete a marketing

operation for that day. About 70 percent of Wisconsin's farmers hire a trucker to haul livestock to market. This means that many farmers cannot respond quickly to daily changes in market prices, and therefore use daily reports only to gauge the general direction of price movement.

The farm audience is declining, but the value of agricultural output continues to increase and some reporting of agricultural markets will always be desirable. As output per farm increases with farm size and improvements in technology, more farmers will likely use futures markets to hedge operations or fix their selling prices. This trend will mean more listeners and program sponsors for some stations.

Wisconsin studies show that station personnel as well as many farmers do not understand some of the terms used in reporting agricultural markets. Understandability is further complicated by the fact that some livestock grades quoted by USDA reporters at terminal markets are not the same ones buyers are using in local markets. The trend toward more contract buying by packers, coupled with special grades, can only lead to a period of greater confusion. Terminal market price quotations and grades can be expected to have less and less meaning to farmers, while local prices and marketing conditions become increasingly important.

The task of covering local markets will likely become the rather exclusive domain of the local broadcast media. At the present, most stations supplement wire reports with prices and receipts at one or two of the largest buyers in their area; ignoring packer representatives, dealers, truckers, and other small buyers. Prices are usually obtained by telephone, with no effort made to verify prices or receipts. Under such a reporting system, prices can be emphasized or manipulated to the advantage of the buyer. Periodic verification of local prices and receipts should become the minimum standard practice for all broadcast media.

As Wisconsin has no federal-state livestock market reporting service at this time, efficient market reporting depends to a large extent upon the initiative of the broadcast media. Stations in many areas could be of greater service to listeners by expanding their reporting of livestock markets to more buyers.

Agricultural broadcasters might find their jobs easier and their programs more understandable by pressing for fewer and simplier terms to describe market activity.

Despite the decline in the potential number of agricultural listeners, broadcasters need to keep in mind that good reporting of agricultural markets should lead to greater efficiency in marketing. This means lower prices to all consumers, thus a benefit to all of their listeners.

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ERRATUM

On page 4, paragraph 1 should read as follows:

Market news reports used a large percentage of the time allotted for agricultural news programming, as indicated in Table 2. The typical Wisconsin AM station broadcast nine or more minutes, while over one-third gave 17 or more minutes of market news. FM stations tended to give somewhat less total market news, usually 5-6 minutes daily.

You may want to paste this corrected paragraph over the erroneous one.

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